

MASTER'S PROGRAMME
CLASSICS AND ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

QANU
Catharijnesingel 56
PO Box 8035
3503 RA Utrecht
The Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0) 30 230 3100
E-mail: support@qanu.nl
Internet: www.qanu.nl

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This report was finalised on 8 July 2020



REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME CLASSICS AND ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments as a starting point (September 2018).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

Master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations

Name of the programme:	Oudheidstudies
International name:	Classics and Ancient Civilizations
CROHO number:	60821
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	Classics Ancient History
Location:	Groningen
Mode of study:	full time, part time
Language of instruction:	English
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/05/2020

The visit of the assessment panel Region Studies to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen took place on 30 and 31 October and 1 November 2019.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	University of Groningen
Status of the institution:	publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 4 March 2019. The panel that assessed the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations consisted of:

- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Van Nuffelen, research professor in Cultural History of the Ancient World at Ghent University (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. dr. D.M. (Diederik) Oostdijk, professor in English Literature at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. E.J.C. (Eibert) Tigchelaar, research professor in Biblical Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Dr. N.A. (Nicolet) Boekhoff-van der Voort, lecturer Islam and Arabic at the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies of the Radboud University;
- Prof. dr. G. (Gert) Buelens, professor in English and American Literature at Ghent University (Belgium);
- E.L. (Emma) Mendez Correa, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member].

The panel was supported by drs. E.G.M. (Mariette) Huisjes, who acted as secretary.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen was part of the cluster assessment Region Studies. Between March 2019 and November 2019 the panel assessed 38 programmes at 5 universities: Radboud University, Leiden University, University of Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of Groningen.

Panel members

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Van Nuffelen, research professor Cultural History of the Ancient World at Ghent University (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. dr. D.M. (Diederik) Oostdijk, professor in English Literature at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. A. (Umar) Ryad, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.J.C. (Eibert) Tigchelaar, research professor of the research unit Biblical Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. G. (Gunnar) De Boel, professor in (Greek) Linguistics and Modern Greek and Byzantine Literature (Department of Literary Studies) at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. I. (Inge) Brinkman, professor in African Studies at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. G. (Gert) Buelens, professor in English and American Literature at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Dr. D. (Diana Bullen) Presciutti, senior lecturer in Art History, director of Global Studies and director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Centre at the University of Essex (United Kingdom);
- R.A. (Rianne) Clerc-de Groot MA, teacher in Classics at the Cygnus Gymnasium in Amsterdam;
- Dr. D. (Dario) Fazzi, lecturer in North American Studies and International Studies at Leiden University;
- Prof. dr. A.F.R. (Ann) Heirman, professor in Chinese Language and Culture at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. A. (Axel) Holvoet, professor at the Institute of the Languages and Cultures of the Baltic of Vilnius University (Lithuania);
- Prof. dr. V. (Vincent) Houben, professor Geschichte und Gesellschaft Südostasiens at Humboldt Universität Berlin (Germany);
- Prof. dr. E.M.H. (Helena) Houvenaghel, professor in Spanish Language and Culture at Utrecht University;
- Prof. D. (Daeyeol) Kim, professor at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INaLCO) of the Université Sorbonne Paris Cité (France);
- L. (Lotte) Metz MA, teacher in Greek and Latin at the Stedelijk Gymnasium Nijmegen;
- Prof. dr. J. (John) Nawas, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. A. (Andreas) Niehaus, head of the International Office and professor at the Department Languages and Cultures (South and East Asia) at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. J.L.M. (Jan) Papy, professor in Latin Literature at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Dr. N.A. (Nicolet) Boekhoff-van der Voort, teacher Islam studies and coordinator Graduate School for Humanities at Radboud University;
- C. (Charlotte) van der Voort, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture, and pre-master's student Dutch Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member];
- L. (Lara) van Lookeren Campagne, bachelor's student in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam [student member];
- G.M. (Gerieke) Prins, bachelor's student in Social and Migration History with a minor in Latin American Studies at Leiden University [student member];
- E.L. (Emma) Mendez Correa, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member];
- Dr. H. (Helma) Dik, associate professor in Classics at University of Chicago (United States) [referee Greek, Latin and Classics at the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam];
- Prof. dr. L.P. (Lars) Rensmann, professor in European Politics and Society at University of Groningen [referee International Studies Leiden University];

- Em. prof. dr. C.H.M. (Kees) Versteegh, emeritus professor in Arabic and Islam at Radboud University [referee Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies University of Amsterdam];
- Prof. dr. H. (Harco) Willems, professor in Egyptology at KU Leuven (Belgium) and director of the excavation in Dayr al-Barshā (Egypt) [referee Ancient Near East Studies Leiden University];
- Prof. dr. J. (Jaap) Wisse, professor in Latin Language & Literature at Newcastle University (United Kingdom) [referee Greek, Latin and Classics at the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam].

For each site visit, assessment panel members were selected based on their expertise, availability and independence.

The QANU project manager for the cluster assessment was dr. Els Schröder. She acted as secretary in the site visit to Radboud University and in the first site visit to Leiden University (June 2019). In order to assure the consistency of assessment within the cluster, the project manager was present at the start of the site visits as well as the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at the other site visits and reviewed the draft reports. During her leave of absence, she was replaced by her colleagues at QANU. Dr. Irene Conradie acted as project manager in the combined site visit to the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and in the second site visit to Leiden University (November 2019). Dr. Anna Sparreboom acted as project manager in the site visit to the University of Groningen.

Several secretaries assisted in this cluster assessment. Drs. Trees Graas, employee of QANU, also acted as secretary in the site visit to Radboud University. Drs. Mariette Huisjes, freelance secretary for QANU, also acted as secretary in the first site visit to Leiden University and in the site visit to the University of Groningen. Drs. Erik van der Spek, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the second site visit to Leiden University (November 2019). Dr. Marielle Klerks, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the combined site visit to the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The QANU project managers and the secretaries regularly discussed the assessment process and outcomes.

Preparation

On 22 November 2018, the panel chair was briefed by the project manager on the tasks and working method of the assessment panel and more specifically his role, as well as use of the assessment framework. Prior to the site visit, the panel members received instruction by telephone and e-mail on the tasks and working method and the use of the assessment framework. A schedule for the site visit was composed. Prior to the site visit, representative partners for the various interviews were selected. See Appendix 3 for the final schedule.

Before the site visit, the programmes wrote self-evaluation reports of the programmes and sent these to the project manager. She checked these on quality and completeness and sent them to the panel members. The panel members studied the self-evaluation reports and formulated initial questions and remarks, as well as positive aspects of the programmes.

The panel also studied a selection of 15 theses and their assessment forms, based on a provided list of graduates between 2016-2018. A variety of topics, tracks and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection (see Appendix 4).

Site visit

The site visit to the University of Groningen took place on 30 and 31 October and 1 November 2019. At the start of each site visit, the panel discussed its initial findings on the self-evaluation reports and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit. During the site visit, the panel studied additional materials about the programmes and exams, as well as minutes of the Programme Committee and the Board of Examiners. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 4. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes: students and staff members, the programme's management, alumni and representatives of the Board of Examiners.



Members of the Programme Committee were included as part of the interviews with staff and students. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for private consultation were received.

The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the panel's preliminary findings and general observations. The visit concluded with a development dialogue, held in parallel sessions, in which the panel members and the representatives of the programme discussed various development routes for the programmes. The results of this conversation are summarised in a separate report, which will be published through the programmes' communication channels.

Report

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to the project manager for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel. After processing the panel members' feedback, the project manager sent the draft reports to the faculty in order to have it/these checked for factual irregularities. The project manager discussed the ensuing comments with the panel's chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The report was then finalised and sent to the Faculty of Arts and University Board.

Definition of judgements standards

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment framework for limited programme assessments, the panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the standards:

Generic quality

The quality that, from an international perspective, may reasonably be expected from a higher education Associate Degree, Bachelor's or Master's programme.

Meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard.

Partially meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard to a significant extent, but improvements are required in order to fully meet the standard.

Does not meet the standard

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard.

The panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the programme as a whole:

Positive

The programme meets all the standards.

Conditionally positive

The programme meets Standard 1 and partially meets a maximum of two standards, with the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel.

Negative

In the following situations:

- The programme fails to meet one or more standards;
- The programme partially meets Standard 1;
- The programme partially meets one or two standards, without the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel;
- The programme partially meets three or more standards.

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations offers a broad approach to antiquity, with an emphasis on intercultural and interdisciplinary skills and lots of freedom for students to follow their own interests. The panel acknowledges that the programme caters for a broad professional field and does not have a distinctive profile. However, it does have an important function, not only for the students who choose this programme from the start, but at least as much for students from other programmes, such as the educational master's programme Greek and Latin Language and Culture, the master's programme History and the research master's programme Classical, Medieval and Early Modern Studies and other programmes, whose students may take Classics or Ancient History courses as electives. The panel can appreciate the value of this position. It therefore accepts that there is no structural connection with future employers. It finds the intended learning outcomes to be of the appropriate level and orientation and in accordance with international requirements for master graduates. It is convinced that graduates from this programme have acquired a societally valuable education, with an emphasis on intercultural and interdisciplinary skills. In its view, this could be emphasised more in the intended learning outcomes and in the marketing of the programme.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The panel finds that the curriculum of the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations offers its students ample opportunity to follow their own interests and get out of the programme whatever they want, while still enabling them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The core of the programme is the analysis of sources on antiquity, whether they be literary, historiographical, epigraphical or archaeological. The programme contains some very interesting courses, in the panel's view. All classes in the programme consist of small groups combining a lecture and active discussions. This is a suitable and commendable method to achieve the intended learning outcomes, according to the panel. In some cases, peer feedback is part of the teaching method, which the panel finds innovative and well-suited to the aims of the programme. The thesis trajectory is well-structured and well-supervised, particularly when the programme starts organising a thesis seminar in November, as it intends to.

The feasibility, student support, and programme-specific services all are in order, as is the labour market orientation. The lecturers are a genuine asset to the programme, in the panel's view. In their present formation, they cover a broad range of specialisations, are closely knit, dedicated to teaching, competent and enthusiastic. The panel strongly advises the programme to do its utmost to keep the present lecturers connected to the programme.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel noted that the assessment system of the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations is in good order, with varied, effective and sometimes innovative assessment methods such as blogs, vlogs or book reviews. It appreciates these methods, since they are excellently suited to train students in explaining complex subjects to a broader audience. It also appreciates the quality of the personal feedback that the students receive. It found that the programme responds well to the students' criticisms. One of those criticisms is that deadlines are not strictly adhered to. It recommends that the programme enforce the deadlines, in order to create a level playing field. The new assessment forms for the master's theses can provide an excellent substantiation of the final mark, in its view, although it is important that both the first and the second examiner fill them out completely and that both forms are archived. The panel found no serious problems with the thesis assessments themselves. It would have graded some theses differently, but these differences were not significant. Many of the thesis forms contain excellent feedback. The panel was informed during the site visit that the new central Arts Board of Examiners has been positively received. It endorses the benefits of harmonising procedures and efficiency gains. It compliments the members of the new Board of Examiners on the energetic way in which they have expeditiously shaped its duties and the associated procedures.



Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

Based on the assessment policy, the quality of the master's theses and alumni careers, the panel determined that the graduates have achieved the intended learning outcomes. It found that the theses in the sample it studied were generally of good quality. Alumni find employment in a broad array of professions, testifying to the fact that this master's programme offers a broad, sound, high-level academic education, with the ability to analyse complex texts, to reflect on cultural differences, and to work in multidisciplinary teams as particular assets.

The panel assesses the standards from the *Assessment framework for limited programme assessments* in the following way:

Master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

The chair, prof. dr. Peter Van Nuffelen, and the secretary, drs. Mariette Huisjes, of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 8 July 2020

DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR LIMITED FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENTS

Context

The master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations is one of over 40 master's degree programmes offered by the Faculty of Arts at the University of Groningen. Since 2018, the faculty's programmes have been managed by 5 management clusters. The master's programme in Classics and Ancient Civilizations is part of the Classics, History, Archaeology, Middle Eastern Studies and American Studies (CHARMA) cluster. Per programme, a programme coordinator acts as a link between the lecturers and the cluster board.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

Findings

Profile

The master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations offers a broad approach to the academic study of the ancient worlds. Its graduates are trained in the analysis of and reflection on a culture that is both foundational for our own and also very different from it. The programme has two tracks: Classics (geared towards students with a linguistic and literary interest) and Ancient History (for those students who have a primarily historical interest). The latter track does not require knowledge of Greek and Latin. Both tracks together aspire to continue the interdisciplinary approach of the ancient world that is also characteristic of the Dutch-language bachelor's programme 'Greek and Latin languages and cultures'. Students of the Classics track share a classroom with students from the educational master's programme Greek, Latin and Classical Culture; those of the History track share a classroom with students from the master's programme History. Courses in both tracks are also taken by students from the research master in Classical, Medieval and Early Modern Studies.

The master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations is chosen by only a handful of students each year. It is designed, however, to serve other groups of students as well: those in the adjacent master's programmes (educational master's programme Greek, Latin and Classical Culture, master's programme History and research master Classical, Medieval and Early Modern Studies) and those from other programmes who wish to take an elective. Thus, the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations serves two functions apart from catering for its own students (those who wish to study classics without the ambition to become a teacher or a researcher). Firstly, it gives many students at the University of Groningen a chance to get acquainted with the classics, which broadens and enhances their views on top of their own specialisations. Secondly, it acts as a refuge for those students who started out in the educational or the research master's programme, but then changed their minds. As the programme serves multiple functions and allows students from different programmes to share the same classroom, the classes in the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations can still be made profitable.

The panel found that the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations does not have a distinct profile that sets it off from closely related master's programmes in the Netherlands or abroad. It does have a clear and valuable function within the academic landscape of the University of Groningen, as described above. The panel accepts this situation and can see that it is advantageous for many. Possibly, the programme could market itself more assertively as a classics programme that trains students in adopting an intercultural and interdisciplinary perspective and gives them lots of space to follow their own interest. This profile would be justified by both the contents of the programme and the population of the classroom, which brings together students from many different academic and sometimes cultural backgrounds. Intercultural and interdisciplinary competences and



the ability to analyse complex texts combined with a sound academic education in classics at a high level would equip the graduates well for a broad variety of positions in the labour market, in the panel's view. Such a profile would also be suited, for instance, for policy making, the civil service, media or communication. Highlighting this intercultural and interdisciplinary profile more explicitly may help the programme to attract more students (including international ones), which is its stated ambition. Using alumni (or employers of alumni) in marketing activities seems like a good idea, and the panel applauds the programme's initiatives in that direction.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations build on those of the bachelor's programme Greek and Latin Language and Culture, but are of a higher level throughout. They focus more strongly on research training. For a full overview of the intended learning outcomes, see Appendix 1. They are grouped into five categories, in accordance with the Dublin descriptors: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, forming judgements, communication and learning skills. They include specialist disciplinary competence (in either Greek or Latin or ancient history) as well as broader academic skills, with an emphasis on the analysis and reflection on texts and cultures. They are aligned with the international standards for classics degrees that include history, the panel found, in particular the *Subject benchmark statement classics and ancient history* of the British Quality Assurance Agency.

The panel found that the intended learning outcomes are clearly described, of the appropriate academic level, and aligned with international standards. The programme shares an advisory board with the bachelor's programme Greek and Latin Language and Culture and the educational master's programme Greek, Latin and Classical Culture, in which representatives from the professional field, alumni and staff members discuss the programme's connection to the labour market. The panel appreciates the programme's intention to include interdisciplinary skills more explicitly into the intended learning outcomes, since this aligns with the choice for a broad professional field. It encourages the programme to carry out this intention further in the future.

Considerations

The master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations offers a broad approach to antiquity, with an emphasis on intercultural and interdisciplinary skills and lots of freedom for students to follow their own interests. The panel acknowledges that the programme caters for a broad professional field and does not have a distinctive profile. However, it does have an important function, not only for the students who choose this programme from the start, but at least as much for students from other programmes, such as the educational master's programme Greek, Latin and Classical Culture, the master's programme History and the research master's programme Classical, Medieval and Early Modern Studies and other programmes, whose students may take Classics or Ancient History courses as electives. The panel can appreciate the value of this position. It therefore accepts that there is no structural connection with future employers. It finds the intended learning outcomes to be of the appropriate level and orientation and in accordance with international requirements for master graduates. It is convinced that graduates from this programme have acquired a societally valuable education, with an emphasis on intercultural and interdisciplinary skills. In its view, this could be emphasised more in the intended learning outcomes and in the marketing of the programme.

Conclusion

Master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Findings*Programme language*

Since Dutch classicists have built up a good reputation for themselves in the international research field, and since an international classroom is seen as valuable for the training of intercultural competences, in 2018 the cluster board decided to switch the language of instruction of the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations from Dutch to English. This was not a huge switch, since classes were already taught in English whenever there was an international student present, as there often was. Students in the educational master who take part in the programme are allowed to write their papers and thesis in Dutch, since their didactic practice will also be in Dutch.

The students wrote in their contribution to the self-evaluation report that some of them struggle with their English at the start of the programme, especially those who took their bachelor's programme exclusively in Dutch. Starting out on their master's programme, they have to give presentations in English, discuss in English, and if the assessment method contains an element of peer review by international students, they have to write their papers in English as well (if no international students are involved, papers and theses may be written in Dutch). The lecturers support these students by providing them with a list of tips for the correct use of academic English. Also, mistakes in English are not held against them in the assessment of papers. The students said their lecturers' proficiency in English is up to the mark.

The programme managers consciously decided to stick to English and said they balanced the benefits of an international classroom against the drawbacks of Dutch students having trouble adapting to the use of English. The panel can follow them in this reasoning. It recommends supporting students with their English as far as necessary, by taking care that Dutch students get sufficient space during discussions, for instance, and by being as flexible as possible, for instance by occasionally accepting papers in Dutch as the language of assessment. This can be done, since acquiring English communication skills is not an official intended learning outcome for this programme.

Curriculum content and structure

The master's programme offers a full-time and part-time programme. In principle, part-time students follow the same curriculum as full-time students, but at a slower pace. The findings and considerations in this report apply to both part-time and full-time students.

For a schematic overview of the curriculum, see Appendix 2. As stated above, the programme has two tracks: Classics and Ancient History. For the latter, the students do not need proficiency in Latin or Greek. Both tracks have the same structure, consisting of two obligatory modules of 10 EC each, a 5 EC interdisciplinary module that is shared by the two tracks, while 15 EC is reserved for electives (or possibly a 5 EC elective and a 10 EC internship) and 20 EC for the thesis.

For students in the Classics track, the obligatory modules are a 'Commentary course' in the first semester and a 'Thematic course' in the second semester. These two courses are complementary. The 'Commentary course' provides a thorough training in philological skills, by commenting on specific Greek or Latin texts that are thematically related. The students are trained in textual criticism, lexicographical and stylistic analysis, and the use of a wide range of reference works. The 'Thematic course' also combines Greek and Latin and concentrates on a research theme related to the work of at least one of the two instructors. In the past two years, this theme has been 'Fate and fortune in classical literature'. Both these obligatory courses are co-taught by a Hellenist and a Latinist.



For students in the Ancient History track, the obligatory modules are the 'Research seminar ancient history I' and the 'Research seminar ancient history II', both focussing on topics connected with the research projects of the staff. In 2017-2018 for instance, the topics were 'Athens and Rome' and 'The Roman empire in the third century'. In 2019-2020, the topics were 'Exploring late antiquity' and 'Athletes and oracles'.

In the interdisciplinary module shared by both tracks, the students study a topic at the intersection of literary and historical-archaeological studies, co-taught by several lecturers. The module changes regularly. In 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, the topic was 'Landscapes of memory', and the course was taught by a Latinist working on landscapes of war in Latin literature and an ancient historian working on sacred landscapes of the Greek world. In 2019-2020 the topic is 'Texts, language and ancient religion'.

Of the electives the students may take, one is offered by the programme itself. This is the course 'Greek epigraphy', which includes a week-long stay at the Dutch Institute in Athens. The students may also choose a course given by the Faculty of Arts, or by the Philosophy, Theology or Religious Studies programmes. These all offer relevant courses related to the ancient world. Students who wish to deepen their linguistic knowledge may choose an elective in the national Master Language programme in classical languages. Alternatively, they may replace two of the elective courses by one internship.

The panel finds the curriculum of the master's programme Classics and Ancient History quite loosely designed, by being more eclectic rather than setting out certain learning trajectories. What ties the courses together, however, is the analysis of sources on antiquity, whether they be literary, historiographical, epigraphical or archaeological. Given its profile and position as described above, the choices made for the curriculum seem quite defensible to the panel. It appreciates that there is a good balance between compulsory and elective modules. In their contribution to the self-evaluation, the students say they are happy with some recent changes in the curriculum, which allow them to stay close to their interests while taking electives and which leave more space for an internship.

When studying the course materials, the panel greatly appreciated some of the courses, for instance the interdisciplinary course 'Landscapes of memory'. This course is really original, in its view, and a clever integration of several disciplines. The commentary course seems to provide an excellent training for classicists in the making, for it adapts a traditional philological practice (close reading and commenting on texts) to the twenty-first century, allowing the students to choose the type of commentary (scholarly, didactic, literary, ...) and infusing the outcome with contemporary literary theory. The panel appreciates the programme's intention to experiment with differentiated teaching and assessment in this interdisciplinary module, so that students from the Classics track and from the educational master's programme will be able to work with original sources, as they would like to, while students from the Ancient History track take different options.

Teaching methods

All courses take the form of small-scale research seminars that combine a lecture by an instructor with discussions between the students. Since many of the courses combine Greek and Latin, or linguistic and historic themes, they are often co-taught. The courses are always thematically close to the lecturers' research interests, so the teaching and research are intertwined. In their contribution to the self-evaluation, the students said that they find the quality of teaching in this programme high and challenging, which they appreciate. The panel judged that the teaching methods match the intended learning outcomes. It appreciates that peer feedback on assignments is an integral part of the programme. This fits well with its intercultural and interdisciplinary character. Students coming from the bachelor's programme Greek and Latin Language and Culture do experience some overlap. This should be minimised, in the panel's view, but on the other hand probably cannot be completely avoided because of the diverse composition of the classroom. Finally, the panel appreciates that some of the courses include an excursion to Greece or Italy. It encourages this practice, for this

provides the students with first-hand experience of the places and cultures they are studying, and allows them to apply what they have learned to concrete objects and spaces.

Thesis trajectory

The thematic courses and the commentary course may serve as a source of inspiration for the master's thesis. For this reason, all of these courses are taught in the first semester. The students are free to choose their own thesis topic. In the Classics track, the topic must be in the fields of Greek, Latin, or ancient philosophy, while in the Ancient History track, it must be in ancient history or classical and Mediterranean archaeology. In both tracks it is also possible to write a thesis on the audience response to a Graeco-Roman work. In consultation with their supervisors, the students draw up a thesis plan, which summarises the contents of the thesis, including the problem definition, preliminary chapter headings and sub-questions, and a brief list of sources and secondary literature. It also contains a time schedule and an overview of the planned submission dates. This enables the supervisor and study advisor to closely monitor progress. There is a thesis brochure that guides the students through the writing process. In the past, there have been problems with the information given to students about the thesis trajectory, which was received too late. The lecturers found the cause of this problem and promised that it will not occur again. They also took on the students' suggestion to organise a thesis seminar in November, as is done in the bachelor's programme Greek and Latin Language and Culture. The panel considers this a good idea, since it will confront the students with what is expected of them in terms of the master's thesis at an early stage.

Feasibility and student support

The lecturers are aware that their classes consist of students who come from different backgrounds, have different ambitions, and orientate towards different specialisations. The panel found that they go the extra mile to accommodate these differences as best they can. The workload is spread evenly over the programme, and course manuals provide precise information about the time investment needed for each element in the courses. If necessary, the Programme Committee plays an active part in adapting the workload in a course, and the lecturers are responsive to their suggestions. As a consequence, the panel found that the programme is perceived as challenging but feasible. An alumnus shared with the panel that he had no problems following the History track, even without mastery of Greek and Latin. Classics students who wish to deepen their knowledge in Greek and Latin can do an elective in the national Master Language programme in classical languages. In short: the students may work out for themselves what they want to get out of the programme and – within the limits of the intended learning outcomes – they are supported in their choices. Since the research specialisations of the staff cover a wide variety of topics, the students also have a broad choice of themes they may explore.

The programme committee plays an active part in safeguarding the quality of the programme. It consists of three student members (two of whom represent the bachelor's programme Greek and Latin Language and Culture, one the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations) and three staff members. The panel studied the minutes of its meetings and found that the programme committee is active, accessible, and transparent. The students stated that given the small community involved in this master's programme, there is a lot of personal contact with the lecturers. They are held responsible for their own study success, but if necessary, they get all the support they need from their lecturers. The panel concluded that feasibility and student support are in order.

Labour market orientation

At the request of the programme committee, the programme recently restructured its curriculum to make it easier to do an internship. Since there is no obvious career path for the master's students in Classics and Ancient History, the panel thinks this is a good idea. It gives the students the opportunity to try out a certain type of organisation and see if it matches their expectations, and vice versa. Also, it is not unusual for a student to show what he or she is capable of during an internship and eventually get a job at this same organisation. The faculty's Mobility Office supports the students in finding an internship. It also offers advice to students with questions about their future careers. Together with the Boreas study association, the programme organises a biennial 'career day', on which alumni from



different sectors talk about their experiences. Finally, the alumni and potential future employers on the programme's advisory board are also available for advice. The panel therefore judges that the students in the master's programme Classics and Ancient History receive sufficient support in their labour market orientation.

Lecturers

The programme recently experienced a period of turbulence and understaffing. Since the latest accreditation, the staff has been expanded and rejuvenated. Now the lecturers form a closely knit and enthusiastic team with a wide range of specialisations, as the programme stated in its self-evaluation. The personnel gaps that the previous accreditation panel noted have been filled. The students are pleased with their lecturers. They find them competent and helpful. They feel that the lecturers are not only good researchers, but also dedicated to teaching. It seems to be no coincidence that a Classics instructor has been nominated for 'lecturer of the year' for three years in a row. The panel concurs with the positive image outlined above. It got the impression that the lecturers are doing their utmost to offer the highest didactic quality possible. In its opinion, it is now of great importance for the programme to retain and continue the positive vibe it has managed to build up.

Programme-specific services

Through the Groningen University Library and ICT department, the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations has the use of special fonts and Greek and Latin digitised literary texts, inscriptions and papyri, as well as bibliographical databases. For excursions, the programme can use the facilities of the Royal Dutch Institute in Rome and the Dutch Institute in Athens. With this, the panel assesses the programme-specific services to be sufficient.

Considerations

The panel finds that the curriculum of the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations offers its students ample opportunity to follow their own interests and get out of the programme whatever they want, while still enabling them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The core of the programme is the analysis of sources on antiquity, whether they be literary, historiographical, epigraphical or archaeological. The programme contains some very interesting courses, in the panel's view. All classes in the programme consist of small groups combining a lecture and active discussions. This is a suitable and commendable method to achieve the intended learning outcomes, according to the panel. In some cases, peer feedback is part of the teaching method, which the panel finds innovative and well-suited to the aims of the programme. The thesis trajectory is well-structured and well-supervised, particularly when the programme starts organising a thesis seminar in November, as it intends to.

The feasibility, student support, and programme-specific services all are in order, as is the labour market orientation. The lecturers are a genuine asset to the programme, in the panel's view. In their present formation, they cover a broad range of specialisations, are closely knit, dedicated to teaching, competent and enthusiastic. The panel strongly advises the programme to do its utmost to keep the present lecturers connected to the programme.

Conclusion

Master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Findings*Assessment system*

With its assessment system, the programme follows the vision on assessment set by the University of Groningen and the Faculty of Arts. In this vision, assessment is used not only to determine whether the students have achieved the intended learning outcomes, but also to direct the learning process. To stimulate this, accurate information provided in advance and adequate feedback afterwards are important. Assessment can also help the lecturers to assess the effectiveness of their didactic methods. In the Classics track, the commentary course is assessed through a commentary on original Greek and Latin texts with an introduction, critical text and translation, as well as oral presentations and discussions. The thematic course is assessed by an oral exam on the primary literature studied and by a research paper on Greek or Latin texts in the original language, taking critical account of the academic literature on the subject. In the Ancient History track, the two research seminars are assessed by scholarly research papers at the end of the course, and by analysing sources of various kinds. The programme also has a wide variety of tests, including book reviews, research essays, commentaries, blogs, vlogs and other digital outputs. The students always receive detailed feedback, definitely in writing and sometimes also orally. An assessment plan links the various courses to the learning objectives and thus guarantees that students who have successfully completed the entire programme meet the final qualifications.

The panel finds the assessment methods not only sufficiently varied, well spread through the curriculum and effective, but in some cases also innovative and resourceful. Blogs and vlogs, for instance, are a great way to train students in making complex subjects available to a wider audience. It appreciates this, as it appreciates the extensive feedback that the students receive. Moreover, in their contribution to the self-evaluation report, the students mentioned that they appreciate the many different ways in which they are assessed. They even specified this level of variation in assessment methods as one of the programme's strongest points. However, they also mentioned a few points that could be improved. Firstly, the assessment criteria are not entirely clear to them in some cases. Secondly, it bothers them that not all students comply with the deadlines, and that this failure has no consequences. The panel can understand this, since if deadlines are postponed arbitrarily, this effectively gives the late submitters an unfair advantage. It therefore recommends that the lecturers strictly enforce their deadlines. Concerning the assessment criteria, the programme already promised that starting from September 2019, all lecturers will orally explain these criteria in the first meeting of each course, in addition to the written specification of the assessment criteria in the course manuals. In the panel's view, this promise will not only solve a particular problem, but also bear witness to a healthy willingness by the lecturers to take the students' criticisms seriously.

Board of examiners

The assurance of assessment quality within the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations rests with the Board of Examiners. Until January 1, 2019, this was the Board of Examiners History, Media Studies and Greek and Latin Language and Culture. From that date, this group continued as an expertise team within a new central Arts Board of Examiners. The chairs of the constituent expertise teams sit on this new Board of Examiners, along with a professional assessment expert. The Board evaluates the assessment of individual courses and the theses on a random basis, trying to give as many courses as possible an evaluation once every three years. It has drawn up a protocol for these evaluations: ensuring that the assessment proceeds in accordance with its own rules and guidelines, that the learning objectives stated in the assessment plan are assessed for each course, and that the assessment is valid, reliable and transparent. The evaluations by the Board of Examiners take place on the basis of the test files supplied by the course co-ordinators and lecturers. These contain study instructions, papers/exams and assessment forms, possible resits, answer models, and result lists with partial and final grades. In addition to evaluating



the assessment quality, the Board of Examiners also has an advisory function with regard to, for instance, regulations and assessment forms.

The panel was informed during the site visit that the recent transition to one central board of examiners has been received very positively all around. An important advantage is that procedures throughout the entire Faculty of Arts can be made comparable; also, one central board of examiners can work more efficiently than several decentralised ones. Expertise teams are available within the Board of Examiners for programme-specific matters. The panel endorses the benefits of the new central board of examiners and compliments its members on the energetic way in which they have expeditiously put the new working method on track. They did this, for example, by facilitating the assurance process and by drawing up rules and guidelines and an evaluation protocol. Providing a single 'counter' for the faculty where everyone can go with questions or complaints about assessment is another goal. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to keep up the good work and is confident that, in the future as well as in the present, the assessment quality of the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations can be safely entrusted to it.

Assessment of theses

For the assessment of the master's theses, the programme has developed its own assessment form and had it approved by the Board of Examiners. The form covers: problem field, question, operationalisation, structure of arguments, use of primary sources, use of secondary literature, annotation, readability and design. The supervisor/first examiner also gives a mark for the thesis-writing process. The form is to be filled in independently by the supervisor and the second examiner. If their opinions diverge, they will involve the Board of Examiners in the decision on the final grade.

The panel studied a sample of the theses and the corresponding assessment forms. It finds the new assessment forms to be excellent, provided that both examiners have filled them in completely. In that case, the final mark is well substantiated. For one thesis in the sample, there was no second assessment form. The panel recommends that the programme ensure that the professionally designed assessment practice is carried out across the board. It indicated that in individual cases, they would have graded a number of theses differently, both higher and lower. However, the differences were not significant. In many cases, the feedback was extensive and of good quality. In general, therefore, the panel finds the thesis assessment to be satisfactory.

Considerations

The panel noted that the assessment system of the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations is in good order, with varied, effective and sometimes innovative assessment methods such as blogs, vlogs or book reviews. It appreciates these methods, since they are excellently suited to train students in explaining complex subjects to a broader audience. It also appreciates the quality of the personal feedback that the students receive. It found that the programme responds well to the students' criticisms. One of those criticisms is that deadlines are not strictly adhered to. It recommends that the programme enforce the deadlines, in order to create a level playing field. The new assessment forms for the master's theses can provide an excellent substantiation of the final mark, in its view, although it is important that both the first and the second examiner fill them out completely and that both forms are archived. The panel found no serious problems with the thesis assessments themselves, even though it would have graded some theses differently. Many of the thesis forms contain excellent feedback. The panel was informed during the site visit that the new central Arts Board of Examiners has been positively received. It endorses the benefits of harmonising procedures and efficiency gains. It compliments the members of the new Board of Examiners on the energetic way in which they have expeditiously shaped its duties and the associated procedures.

Conclusion

Master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations: the panel assesses Standard 3 'meets the standard'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The assessment plan, the assessment system and the quality assurance role of the Board of Examiners guarantee that the intended learning outcomes per course are achieved and thus ultimately the intended learning outcomes of the programme. This is also evident from the quality of the master's theses. The panel studied a sample of them and found them to be of varying quality, but often good or even excellent. They displayed a broad array of topics, with often well-defined research questions, passionate elaboration and original research based on close reading of primary sources.

The programme states that students find employment in a wide variety of fields: a publishing house, a bank, a consultancy firm, the civil service, the American army, and tourism in Greece. Some students proceed with their studies, for instance by training to be a schoolteacher or by doing a research master. Assets of the programme are that its graduates have learned to analyse complex texts, to reflect on cultural differences and to work in an interdisciplinary context. One alumnus made it known to the panel that sharing a classroom with students from different disciplinary backgrounds particularly proved to be very formative and useful in his present job. In this respect, the disadvantage that the master's programme Classics and Ancient History has few students of its own and therefore has to offer classes to a diverse group of students can also be seen as an advantage. The fact that alumni find employment in a broad array of professions testifies that this master's programme offers a broad, sound, high-level academic education, with the ability to analyse complex texts, to reflect on cultural differences and to work in multidisciplinary teams as particular assets. In other words: the graduates have realised the intended learning outcomes.

Considerations

Based on the assessment policy, the quality of the master's theses and alumni careers, the panel determined that the graduates have achieved the intended learning outcomes. It found that the theses in the sample it studied were generally of good quality. Alumni find employment in a broad array of professions, testifying to the fact that this master's programme offers a broad, sound, high-level academic education, with the ability to analyse complex texts, to reflect on cultural differences, and to work in multidisciplinary teams as particular assets.

Conclusion

Master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel assessed standards 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations as 'meets the standard'. Based on the NVAO decision rules regarding limited programme assessments, the panel therefore assesses the programmes as 'positive'.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *master's programme Classics and Ancient Civilizations* as 'positive'.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Dublin Descriptors	Graduates of the Master's programme in Classics and Ancient Civilizations have:
<p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>1. Graduates have demonstrable knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances what is typically associated with the Bachelor's level and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas within a research context.</p>	1.1 advanced specialized knowledge of Greek and Latin Languages and Cultures or Ancient History
	1.2 specialized knowledge and understanding of a literary or linguistic aspect of Greek and/or Latin, or a period or theme in Ancient History
	1.3 advanced knowledge and understanding of the theories, methodologies and techniques of the study of Greek and Latin Languages and Cultures and of Ancient History
<p>Applying knowledge and understanding</p> <p>2. Graduates have the ability to apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem-solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study.</p>	2.1 the ability to apply the methods and techniques of academic research relevant to both tracks
	2.2 the ability to independently collect primary texts and scholarly literature in an academic way and to critically study and analyse them in their coherence and complexity
	2.3 the ability to apply the acquired knowledge and theories, methodologies and techniques to the assessment of research within the discipline or in society
<p>Forming judgements</p> <p>3. Graduates have the ability to formulate judgements based on incomplete or limited information, bearing in mind social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements.</p>	3.1 the ability to systematically and creatively deal with complex academic and social issues and to form well-founded judgements
	3.2 the ability to form independent, critical, logical and ethical judgements about academic research in the field of Greek and Latin Languages and Cultures or Ancient History
	3.3 integrity and a critical attitude towards scholarship and society, as well as historical empathy



<p>Communication</p> <p>4. Graduates have the ability to communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously.</p>	<p>4.1 the ability to report both orally and in writing in an academically sound way on the results of their own research and that of others</p> <p>4.2 the ability to clearly present opinions both orally and in writing for an audience of peers and laypeople, and to exchange ideas with them</p>
<p>Learning skills</p> <p>5. Graduates have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.</p>	<p>5.1 the ability to independently expand their knowledge and understanding based on the awareness that the field of Classical Studies is constantly in motion</p> <p>5.2 the ability to familiarize themselves with the labour market, work at an academic level consistent with the intended working atmosphere and function in a working environment related to their field of study</p> <p>5.3 the ability to independently plan and implement tasks at a professional level and the ability to learn and to organize their time effectively and to meet deadlines</p> <p>5.4 the ability to effectively and efficiently use IT as a study and communication tool</p>

APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Track Classics

1 st semester		2 nd semester	
Commentary Course		10	Thematic Course
Interdisciplinary Course	5	Elective	5
Elective(s) or internship		10	Thesis
			20

Track Ancient History

1 st semester		2 nd semester	
Research Seminar Ancient History I		10	Research Seminar Ancient History II
Interdisciplinary Course	5	Elective	5
Elective(s) or internship		10	Thesis
			20



APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

Day 1 (Wednesday 30 October)	
09.00 - 09.15	Arrival of the panel / Welcome from the Vice-Dean
09.15 - 12.30	Preparation, private panel meeting and documentation review
12.30 - 13.00	Lunch break
13.00 - 13.45	Meeting with faculty senior management
13.45 - 14.15	Private panel meeting
14.15 - 15.00	Meeting with programme management - BA en MA (North) American Studies
15.00 - 15.45	Meeting with students - BA en MA (North) American Studies
15.45 - 16.30	Meeting with staff - BA en MA (North) American Studies
16.30 - 17.30	Private panel meeting and documentation review
17.30 - 18.00	Open consultation hour

Day 2 (Thursday 31 October)	
09.00 - 10.00	Private panel meeting
10.00 - 10.45	Meeting with programme management - B Griekse en Latijnse Taal en Cultuur and M Classics
10.45 - 11.30	Meeting with students - B Griekse en Latijnse Taal en Cultuur en M Classics
11.30 - 12.15	Meeting with staff - B Griekse en Latijnse Taal en Cultuur en M Classics
12.15 - 12.45	Lunch break
12.45 - 13.15	Private panel meeting
13.15 - 14.00	Meeting with programme management - B Midden-Oosten Studies en M Middle Eastern Studies
14.00 - 14.45	Meeting with students - B Midden-Oosten Studies en M Middle Eastern Studies
14.45 - 15.30	Meeting with staff - B Midden-Oosten Studies en M Middle Eastern Studies
15.30 - 16.30	Private panel meeting
16.30 - 17.15	Meeting with Examination Board
17.15 - 17.45	Private panel meeting

Day 3 (Friday 1 November)	
09.00 - 10.00	Private panel meeting and documentation review
10.00 - 11.00	Final interview with management
11.00 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.30	Private panel meeting to formulate conclusions of the visit
12.30 - 13.00	Lunch break
13.00 - 15.30	Private panel meeting to formulate conclusions of the visit
15.30 - 16.30	Development dialogue(s) in three parallel sessions: Middle Eastern; (North) American Studies; Classics
16.30 - 17.00	Informal feedback on the panel's findings and recommendations
17.00 - 18.00	End of the site visit / Drinks

APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Thesis selection

The panel studied 15 theses of the master's programme Classics & Ancient Civilizations; 12 prior to the site visit and 3 afterwards. This was done to complete the panel's picture of the achieved learning outcomes. The selection was based on a provided list of 16 graduates between 2016 and 2018, including information on the 2 specialisations. Since the curriculum, thesis procedure and assessment procedure are the same for full-time and part-time students alike, the panel did not distinguish between them in the thesis selection. A variety of topics and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection. The project manager and panel chair assured that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses. This resulted in the following distribution:

<i>Specialisation</i>	<i>Total number of theses 2016-2018</i>	<i>Thesis selection</i>
Classics	8	7
Ancient History	8	8
Total	16	15

Documents studied

During the site visit, the panel studied, among other things, the following documents (partly as hard copies, partly via the institute's electronic learning environment):

Faculty-wide documents:

- Arts Board of Examiners annual report 2017-2018;
- Arts Board of Examiners minutes 2018-2019;
- BoE Expert team History, Media Studies and Greek and Latin Language and Culture annual report 2017-2018;
- BoE Expert team History, Media Studies and Greek and Latin Language and Culture minutes 2018-2019;
- Big7 Arts Board of Examiners.

Specific reading material master Classics & Ancient Civilizations:

- Self-evaluation report including appendices;
- Programme Committee Greek and Latin Language and Culture annual report 2017-2018;
- Programme Committee Greek and Latin Language and Culture decision list 2018-2019.

Of the following courses, the panel studied complete portfolios (course guide and literature, relevant course documents, assignments, tests and answer keys, a selection of assessed student work and course evaluations):

- Exploring Late Antiquity (LGX195M10);
- Commentary Course Greek and Latin Didactic Poetry (LQX032M10);
- Landscape and Memory in the Ancient World (LQX029M05).

